

A. PAPER PRESENTED

AVAILABILITY OF PRIVATE ARCHIVAL MATERIAL RELATING TO INDIA IN OTHER COUNTRIES*

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The following note draws attention of the scholars and archivists concerned to the possibility of the existence of considerable amount of useful materials outside India in the form of private archives. It further suggests the need to prepare a descriptive list of such archives for the use of the concerned research scholars.

From the early days of Portuguese contact with India at the end of the fifteenth century till India achieved Independence from European powers some thirty years ago, a large number of European administrators, traders, missionaries, etc., are likely to have taken away with them, on their return to their respective countries, documents which may be useful today for researchers in Indian history.

Also at several places in Europe, (as, for example, at the erstwhile centres of organisations having had commercial, ecclesiastical etc., relations with India, there may be accumulated useful historical material relating to India. On the other hand, some of the Indian trading families, that migrated to countries like Burma, Malaya, Singapore, Indonesia, Ceylon, East African and West Asian countries, are likely to have in their possession old records which may be useful for students of, say, business history. Considerable source material relating to India in the form of private archives may thus be available at places outside India. But no attempt appears to have been made so far to compile a unified list of such private archives outside India and indicate their broad contents.

2. Private Archives in Europe relating to India

From the available 'Guide' books to archival collections in Europe, it appears that, as compared to the private archival material relating to India in other countries, the material available in the United Kingdom is better located and documented. (For a discussion of the 'Private archives in the United Kingdom relating to India and problems in consulting them', see the note by the present author in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, Oct.—Dec. 1977, Vol. 14, No. 4, pp. 561—65).

In the United Kingdom and its dependencies, state papers were traditionally kept in the governmental archives, although carrying them home away at the end of the tenure by the concerned administrator, and keeping them in one's respective family archives was not very uncommon. In

*The previous paper entitled 'Private Archives in the United Kingdom, Relating to India and Problems in consulting them' already circulated has been withdrawn as it was published in the *Indian Economic and Social History Review* (Vol. XIV, No. 4 October—December, 1977). The author subsequently sent the present paper which is now being circulated.